

**Testing: Summary of Panel Discussion: Thomas McGuire (ERB), Grant Wiggins (C.L.A.S.S.), et. al.**

**THE ABC'S OF EDUCATION: ACCOUNTABILITY & ASSESSMENT;  
BENCHMARKS & STANDARDS; CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

ISACS/LMAIS Annual Regional Conference, Chicago, 2-3 Nov. 2000.

The following is a summary of information presented in eight of the sessions at the conference.

**ACCOUNTABILITY AND STANDARDS**

Panel Session by Patrick F. Bassett, president, ISACS (IL); Thomas Maguire, president, Educational Records Bureau (NY); Steven McCollum, consultant & teacher, Thomas Jefferson Independent Day School (MO); and Grant Wiggins, president & director, Center of Learning Assessment and School Structure (NJ): Standards, Testing & Accountability.

Of strategic importance for independent schools is how to react to the issues of standards, testing, and accountability in a climate when these have not only educational but political significance. State mandated proficiency testing is already a disruptive reality for independent schools' curriculum and pedagogy in Ohio. In Michigan, while the test is not obligatory by statute, parents demand that schools prepare students for the test--which has a \$2500 prize attached. Independent schools do not oppose standardized testing; most of our schools use the ERB tests, and any sensible assessment uses some independent audit measures. The concern is the loss of curricular independence is the standardized test is defined by the state.

There are advantages to standardized testing: They are an "antidote to the anecdote"; they can efficiently discover a considerable amount of information about a lot of students; they are consistent; they are valid, in that the same test given to the same student at different times gives much the same results. Standardized testing is best used in conjunction with other evidence.

There are disadvantages also: They are of limited value in dealing with substantive skills, and in predicting future behavior; they are highly correlated with socio-economic class; "teaching to the test" is bad for teaching; they can be manipulated by politicians and educators; and state standards have not yet dealt with inherent gender & minority bias.

When talking with trustees and parents, if there is no performance testing, the question arises: "What is our school afraid of? They are making excuses, whereas I want to know where my kid stands relative to others in school, in the state, nationally."

Many schools using ERB scores (which belong to the school, and are not given to parents by ERB) give parents only national norms. And while parents may love the portfolios, and admire what we do with authentic assessment, they still want to know: how does my kid compare? Is she ready for the SAT? How is he doing relative to others in percentile rank? Nationally, a student may rank in the 95th percentile on the ERB test--but not necessarily score at a comparably high level on the SAT. In using ERB data, appropriate comparisons are not with national norms or with suburban norms, but with other independent schools.

No one likes public scrutiny. However, unlike coaches who publish records of games, teachers have had a pass. Teachers have basically been saying, "Trust us, we know what we're doing." Why should education not be held accountable? One problem of course is that a handful of scores distort the picture of what independent education is all about.

While it would be preferable if educators proposed credible alternative legislation instead of bashing existing legislation, one could not come up with a credible test that would be valid for all independent schools in the U.S. But independent schools could arrange for regional grading that would give an externally validated grade against some agreed-on standards, as well as an internal grade that took a broader range of factors into consideration. [See below, session by Grant Wiggins, Making the Grade.]

In any case, commercial versions of tests are preferable to most state tests, which have no oversight. State tests have "questions I could defend in public, questions I could probably convince teachers are useful, and questions for which I could do neither. Some state tests have few or none other than the 'neither.'"

Higher education plays a part in issues of testing in more than just the admissions area. For instance, the NCTM standards which created a terrific improvement in math performance in California were shot down by groups of college professors who did not want to have "advanced" topics taught in high school, considering these to be "reserved" for college courses constructed to winnow out students gradually until only a small elite were left. Professors feared for their authority as NCTM was reversing this process.

In the college admissions area, there are hair-raising stories of grade inflation. One school's applications to Ivy League colleges showed that there were 40 students in the school who were all ranked number 1; another school had 50 class valedictorians; in yet other cases, no one ranked below 25th, or no student was given any grade below a C.

Hundreds of identical transcripts are being compared. Colleges are looking for ways to differentiate; and if grades won't do so, test scores take on more importance. College admissions people use SAT's because we don't give them enough other information. Another thing colleges do is look at the level of difficulty in course selection; but this also is

problematic, since the assumption that physics was a hard course and psychology an easy one is not necessarily accurate, and the relative hardness of the physics course varies greatly in different schools.

Part of colleges' loss of faith in grades is affecting curriculum. Admissions officers want to see AP scores (which carry credibility). Therefore, AP tests are seeping down into junior and sophomore years.

There are schools that do not promote AP courses, and provide neither rank in class nor GPA. They spend a lot of time communicating and explaining to colleges what they do, and that their English course is taught by a University of Chicago Ph.D. Suppose we were to correlate our standards of cross grading internally with, say, University of Chicago freshman standards?

A consortium already exists that designed its own process of assessment, and training for the people involved. Independent schools could do cross-grading at end of year regionally by subject, with samples of student work, having designed a common assessment or not, but in any case designing rubrics for the grading being done. Such "AP reader"-style grading would produce useable information for participating schools, which could provide a second, internal, grade that took the nature of the course and circumstances of the student into account.

Why all the angst about accountability at this time? The original thrust for standards demanded testing for merely minimum competency. At a time of a troubled economy, we used to talk about the problems an inadequate education caused for the US, such as companies getting job applicants who could not read the application form. Currently, however, the US is the leader in the global economy. Clearly, the education/economy connection is a very shaky one. Now, what is said is that we've dumbed down the curriculum, and the bigotry of soft expectations is a disservice to low achievers. Demand now is for all students to take high standard tests, on the assumption that as a result all will come out of school academically strong like they used to (in the old days when only 50% graduated from high school.) However, 60% of students in New York failed the 8th grade standards. When 70% failed in New Jersey, the passing score was lowered, so now only 30% fail. Perhaps we should require that 100% of legislators would have to pass whatever high stakes test they are trying to bring in before it could become law.

Some say that a good argument can be made that schools now are no worse than they have ever been. More ominous is that there are no credible data that any three people can agree on. It's as though soccer was being evaluated by psychometric experts, who don't know whether or not the ball went into the goal. The basic problem is that we do not know how we are doing. Another current problem with standards is that while the NCTM standards are wonderful, the state standards are required, and we can not do both.

Actually, if we have a demanding, powerful curriculum, scores on standardized tests will rise--we don't have to "teach to the test." If we teach good math well, the test scores will take care of themselves. What is important is the student's improvement: in field & track, it is the times that show this, not the ranking on the team.

Are there ways for ISACS to create better accountability? Charter schools are free like us, but are accountable; independent schools are vulnerable because we have freedom without apparent accountability. Why don't we universally track our graduates for 10 years to show that our students are successful? We say this now, subjectively and anecdotally. If we could document it, we could take the evidence of our success to the legislatures, and tell them to leave us alone. Only 25% of college students in the U.S. persist to graduation; we could demonstrate that for students from independent schools the percentage is significantly higher.

We also need to consider how we can use standardized tests to improve student performance, and how best to use such tests not as stand-alones but in concert with a lot of other indicators of how students are doing, to help clarify what the "value-added" is that independent schools bring to a student's education.

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## **ASSESSMENT**

Session by Grant Wiggins, President, Center on Learning, Assessment, and Schools Structure (NJ): Making the Grade

There are four interrelated topics when it comes to grading and reporting: grades & grading; report cards; standards & standardization; and transcripts.

Key questions that need to be asked about grading & reporting:

what is the value of grades as feedback? (discussion of what makes feedback effective is a useful exercise)

what is the purpose of the grade: to report, assess, or evaluate the past and present? To guide, or to predict, future performance? To provide incentives for better performance?

why do we persist in giving only one grade per subject given differences of the same student's level of achievement; progress; growth; performance in different areas of same subject such as memorization, problem-solving, analysis, precision, insight....

who is the audience (student? parents? other teachers in same school? receiving teachers at next level in system?) and what does that audience need to know? Why?

why do we feel that we have to report on every student at the same time?

in the attempt to standardize and give consistent information to the "outside," do we do justice to individual students and their circumstances? If we try to do the latter, does it invalidate the standard of fairness, that all be judged by the exact same criteria?

would test scores be so important if grades were more credible and precise? (i.e. gave more information about students' specific strengths and weaknesses; made clear what components went into the "collapsed" grade; revealed what the students had to do in order to get the grade they got; and revealed how that grade has the student stacking up against some standard (in Canada, for instance, against college entrance exam standards), or against other students.) Note that research shows harm of local grades without external validation: a "B" in an urban high school is a "C-" in a suburban one; SAT's over predict black student college GPA's.

The AP system of grading is credible, because 1. it only looks at the work itself; 2. it is judged by agreed-on standards; 3. it has oversight. In England, school grades are not final until the work being graded is taken to a regional meeting of teachers where it is scored in common ("cross-graded"), and validated.

Suggestions for improving systems of grading and reporting:

Question assumptions.

Jointly develop criteria (rubrics) by which to judge how good a grading/reporting system is. Arrange for focus groups of students and of parents, to discuss what they think a current grade represents, and what kind & level of detail they would like to get in grade reporting. Reveal what grades, what test scores, what portfolio performances, what other assessments are summed up by the grade, and how they are combined to arrive at the grade.

Break out the independent variables in grading: achievement; progress (against standards); growth (against self); habits & attitudes; and work quality.

Discuss ways to achieve and balance in grades & reports fairness, honesty, credibility, thoroughness, informativeness, user-friendliness and feasibility.

Differentiate between "scores" and "grades/marks." Scores are meant to be "objective" and represent the quality or level of work regardless of circumstances or personal history, arrived at by disinterested and reliable judging against credible criteria and standards. Grades/marks are meant to be subjective, and represent an aggregate of factors; they consider personal circumstances; and are framed in terms of local norms.

Do more collaborative, disinterested judging of student work, linking internal grades to external standards.

Consider establishing regional assessment centers for independent school faculties to get together and do group scoring of student work on the pattern of the AP's, the grading to be based on training and oversight, and linked to accepted standards that carry credibility and respect. This would increase the objectivity of grades, and the comparability of grades given in different schools, as well as providing valuable professional development for participating faculty.

Remember that testing, grading, and reporting must teach, not only measure.

Ask for feedback about assessing, grading and reporting practices from students, parents and colleagues, and be open to change based on established criteria.

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## **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

Session by Karen Smeltzer, Curriculum Coordinator, Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy,  
OH: Curriculum in the ISACS Manner

The development by a school of the following three basic curriculum-related documents can serve simultaneously to achieve clarity of aims, methods and expectations; professional development & accountability; and marketing assistance, as well as fulfilling the ISACS requirement of producing/updating a curriculum guide as part of an accreditation evaluation self-study.

1. The conceptual Mission/Vision/Standards/Benchmarks & Assessments statement. In this, the Mission outlines the defining values that are "the anchors, which hold the soul of [the] school in place." Vision, Standards & Benchmarks, having drawn on the National Standards developed for specific fields of study, list in increasing detail for each subject area what students graduating from various levels of the school will value, be able to understand, and be able to do. Descriptions of Assessments indicate how achievement of the benchmarks will be demonstrated.

For instance:

Vision: "Students will apply analytical skills in reading, thought, writing, study and discussion to realize their unique God-given gifts and their place in the world...."

Standards: "Students will demonstrate competence in applying reading strategies to learn from literature and specific types of informational texts."

Benchmarks: "By close of grade 4, students will sequence a story after reading or hearing it; identify main ideas, characters, plot, setting, and supporting details in a selection; decode unknown words by phonetic and structural analysis; read award winning literature of various genres including Christian classic [s]...."

Assessment: "By close of grade 4, student will 1. create various reports and projects using computer technology; 2. read about, write about, memorize, and present orally a biographical piece about a famous person; 3. take the Stanford Achievement Test.

2. The divisional Curriculum Map outlines the scope and sequence of topics taught by grade level and discipline, and shows how the topics relate to the school's values as outlined in the Vision and the Standards. This document provides fruitful opportunities for teachers to discuss transitions between grade levels, avoidance of unnecessary duplication in covering subject matter and skills, identification of gaps that need to be filled, and the proper articulation of continuing subjects.

3. Individual Course Syllabuses, updated by every teacher every year, give a course description; the topics/themes covered each quarter; the resources used; the performance assessments employed (based on rubrics that clearly list evaluation criteria and are distributed before students start work so that "students have a 'blueprint' for achieving success"); and the ways the teacher addresses the presence of different learning styles, remediation, and the bright & gifted. Opportunities for conversations with administrators are provided by the kinds of changes made--or not made-- in a syllabus year by year; mentor teachers/administrators can monitor that learning follows the syllabus.

Valuable as they are, a set of such documents takes care and time to produce; how much time will depend partly on what foundations already exist, and on the level of complexity aimed for. At Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy, an 11-year-old school starting pretty well from scratch, it took an 18-month time-span; a full-time coordinator; about 8 hours' worth of release time for individual teachers, with some additional meetings; strong support from the administration; input from two special panels, convened to tackle diversity issues in History and Language Arts on the one hand and Mathematics on the other; and the establishment of an appointed Curriculum Council to adopt, amend, or reject any suggested changes to the documents produced.

The time and energy spent were clearly well worth it. Helpful suggestions for other schools interested in replicating CHCA's successful experience:

- don't try to reinvent the wheel--use existing standards as springboard.
- empower the leaders who work with others from each subject.
- set deadlines with urgency attached (a compelling reason, such as arrival of a visiting team, really helps).
- pre-set minimum and maximum number of benchmarks.
- allow some in-service time for teacher participants to do the job (it won't be enough, but will prime the pump).
- make sure whoever is in charge is enabled to do a good job (time, and money for finished product).
- ensure closure: the documents produced should look great, and should be referred to and used frequently thereafter.

(Note: a recommended resource for National Disciplinary Standards is Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards K-12. 2nd edition. McRel/ASCD, by Kendall & Marzano. #197254S25, member price \$39.95. ASCD phone # 800-933-2733)

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## **FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Session by Anne Chapman, Ph.D., consultant and author (CA): Life-long Learning: Professional Development for Mid-career and Veteran Teachers.

Teachers in their 40's and older, with 15-20-plus years' experience, tend to be taken for granted. By and large, they are doing "just fine." However, there are at least three structural, built-in features of being a teacher in this category that are professionally and personally problematic.

1. The teaching career-path is flat. Having flowered as a high-potential teacher after 15-20 years, those that want more challenge, more status, more money can only find it by exchanging teaching for administration--which they may not excel at or even like. A way to counteract this: build in steps marked by formal, public transition, and by increased compensation (salary and/or perquisites), from being named a mentor-teacher (to one colleague), to master-teacher (responsible for coordinating/energizing a grade level or subject-area); to endowed chair-holder (relieved of some responsibilities to serve as resource/"critical friend" for the faculty at large).

2. Professional development is among the least visible of a school's accomplishments; for veteran teachers, it is often allowed to lapse. Some ways to counter this; heighten profile by accounts of PD in school publications; presentations based on PD at meetings; contributions derived from PD to a library database.

3. Mid-career and veteran teachers face tough time-of-life concerns. Among them: anxiety about being stuck doing the same thing forever; fear of a downhill performance, of being superseded and disrespected; demands of college age children and deteriorating parents. Those who react with generativity, and invest energy in going for continued growth, need opportunities, time, and support for their efforts at professional renewal. Those who are mired in stagnation, suffer from burnout, tread water, need to have their anxieties, their resentments, and their resistance addressed, not ignored.

According to a 1998 ISACS poll, ISACS schools in general support faculty professional development (though we have no data that refer specifically to veteran faculty.) They

allocate 1-2% of their budget to it [public schools allocate 1-3%, businesses 2-5%].  
fund attendance at workshops & conferences [best value for money is if a whole department, all department chairs, two people from same discipline, or other multiple participants attend].  
provide inservice on the average 3-4 days a year [for best results: provide alternatives; work on one topic for more than a single day; follow up in next year].  
fund work-related graduate courses at 50-100% rate [to multiply benefits, ask that learning be shared with colleagues].  
pay for professional memberships and journal subscriptions [spread these among the various organizations in same field].

make curriculum development grants of \$500-\$5000 per person [faculty-administered, proposal-based grants provide additional professional development].  
Fund sabbaticals [unless well-planned, positive impact of these in individual cases varies].  
However, in the school that wants to nurture life-long learning, more must be done. Life-long learning must be...

expected (mentioned at job-interviews, award-ceremonies, in faculty handbook, at discussions of raises).

supported (with time, money, interest, encouragement).

featured (opportunities made and publicized for gaining new information/perspectives, for experimentation/exploration, for reflection/ research/planning).

rewarded (with praise, public recognition, perks).

integrated (part of curriculum/pedagogy mandates; shows up in classes, schedule, library, informal & formal talk).

given feedback/follow-up (ongoing, specific, frequent).

monitored/assessed (for satisfaction as well as for behavior changes and student outcomes).

A school can begin by taking the "do-it-yourself" route. All schools can exploit existing opportunities for teachers to reflect on their current practice, acquire new perspectives, and learn by sharing. Some examples are...

asking for student feedback (seen by teacher only).

observing, being observed, and talking about it.

reviewing own curriculum with some specific end in view (incorporating NCTM standards, women's history, new assessments).

cross-grading student work with peers, having jointly developed the criteria for assessment (rubrics).

focused reading of professional literature, followed by sharing with colleagues (may lead to proposals for sessions at meetings of professional organizations, and/or writing article).

serving on accreditation evaluation visiting teams.

Instituting a program that creates a climate of life-long learning takes time to do, and time to show results. Many change initiatives are abandoned as "not working" far too soon: research shows changes take 4-5 years to take hold. Some suggestions on ways to make time:

Consider what is there that is now being done that could be... left undone; condensed; done less often; done by fewer people; done by others (administrators, parents, students, retired faculty).

The bottom line: mid-career and veteran teachers need professional development that is ongoing, planned, multifaceted, and targeted to their needs.

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## **MENTORING**

Session by Kathleen A. MacEwan, third grade teacher & Steve Drosdeck, assistant head, lower school director, Hawken School (OH): Mentoring Programs

There is a distinction between supervision and evaluation. Supervision's objective is to provide frequent, high-quality, knowledgeable feedback, in order to help teachers to feel recognized and validated; articulate and meet their own agendas; get suggestions for alternative techniques; gather data and think through solutions to problems.

Evaluation's objective is to maintain high minimum standards of performance, by monitoring the fidelity of the curriculum; identifying weak areas in teacher performance, and focusing on specific steps for improvement; gaining valid and reliable data for making decisions about such things as hiring, grade assignment, commendations, promotions and appointments; identify teachers functioning at an unsatisfactory level, and intervene directly to either remediate or dismiss. Evaluation is not part of any faculty member's mandate; in the Lower School, only the director and the assistant director is engaged in evaluation activities.

Mentoring programs, in place in the Lower School and still "a work in progress" in the Upper School, fit into this framework; and there are several such programs at Hawken.

Providing mentors for interns from John Carroll University's M.Ed. teacher training program carries a stipend for the mentor; is quite formal, with a handbook outlining responsibilities; requires bi-weekly meetings of the mentor-teachers with the graduate intern mentees, as well as observations and monthly evaluations.

The new teacher to Hawken's relationship to a Hawken mentor has been designed to facilitate assimilation into the culture of the school. In most cases, newly hired teachers get to work with their mentor in the summer, before even the first new teacher orientation meeting.

In the Lower School, a grade level/subject area partner (who is paid a stipend--"recognition rather than inducement"-- ) is assigned to provide first year support. New teachers attend weekly mentoring meetings, and the mentor's flexible schedule allows frequent opportunities to provide support/guidance. Visits to observe others' classes at least twice in the first year are mandatory, but observation of the new teacher's class by others is not. Other elements are videotaping, portfolios, journal writing, and projects, accompanied by discussions with mentors. There is some flexibility of choice (in projects and portfolios), and differences in what is expected of experienced (with five years or more teaching experience) and new teachers in the mentor/mentee relationship.

The peer observation program involves informal mentoring. It was developed by the faculty as a result of their visiting each other's classes. This program is seen as generating a sense of collegiality and being inherently satisfying, its necessary components being time, an attitude of experimentation, a specific focus to the observation, training in giving feedback, and clear expectations. Comfort is seen as important, but "being comfortable" is not a goal.

Contributing to comfort is the fact that all peer observations are confidential. Reporting that peer observation has taken place is required; sharing what has been observed is not.

Each faculty member must arrange a minimum of two class observations a year by a peer of their choice, including a pre- and post-observation dialogue for both of which guidelines have been worked out. Examples of possible peer-observations:

- a specific lesson.
- a child or group of children.
- a specific teaching technique or strategy.
- pacing, transitions.
- group dynamics.
- student or parent conferences.
- classroom management.
- a specific concern.

Suggested ways to make time for peer observation: hire a substitute; use breaks in schedule; have assistant teacher, teaching partner or administrator cover/ take over class; get help from parent volunteer; use a grade level activity (video, special event) to provide release time.

Effective mentoring could be defined by:

- the process of nurturing.
- serving as a role model.
- the mentoring functions of teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling and befriending.
- a focus on professional and/or personal development.
- an ongoing caring relationship.

The mentoring relationship is affected by:

- going through a series of phases: initiation, cultivation, separation.
- the mentor's age, gender, organizational position, power and self-confidence.
- the ability to work together, not necessarily based on social background or common outside interests.

In schools, mentoring...

- focuses on classroom practice.
- fosters informal conversation.
- imparts knowledge of school culture and traditions.
- makes connections between theory and practice.

Among the benefits to the mentor is the fact that the mentee's success reflects well on the school; mentoring serves as professional development for both parties involved; mentoring is one way to attend to plateaued teachers, to show them that they are valued; it promotes a culture of collegiality.

One measure of success is that after 8 years of mentoring programs at Hawken Lower School, the climate of opinion among parents that having a new teacher assigned to their child is bad has diminished. Few object to being taught by a new teacher, knowing the breadth and depth of support such teachers are getting; and evaluations of the program by mentors and mentees have been positive.

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## **LEADERSHIP**

Session by Anne Chapman, Ph.D., consultant and author (CA): Nurturing Women and Girls as Leaders: Ourselves, Our Students, Our Colleagues

Mountains of research exist dealing with two dimensions of leadership behavior. One is task-oriented/authoritarian/ instrumental, with the leader pushing for production (whether of mousetraps, knowledge, or revolution); hierarchical, the dominant leader at the top having "power over" others; formal & exclusive, the leader leading by virtue of occupying a slot (director, dean, prefect, captain); competitive, battling for one of the limited number of leadership slots. It is traditionally associated with men.

The other, relationship-oriented/democratic/emotional, where the leader builds morale; is egalitarian, being part of the group, with "power to" accomplish group goals and empower others; informal & inclusive, the leader leading by virtue of taking responsibility for whatever needs doing, and enlisting others to help do it; collaborative, since any number can work together to accomplish group goals. It is traditionally associated with women.

Even though research shows that the single significant difference between female and male leaders is that the former consult more often and widely, and share power more, the two styles are strongly gender-stereotypic. Many girls and women as well as boys and men define leadership as the task-oriented, authoritarian style, having trouble recognizing the relationship-oriented style as leadership at all. Many of both sexes consider that a girl or woman who has adopted the task-oriented "male" style is behaving inappropriately.

Many girls and women themselves feel uncomfortable/ inauthentic/wrong when adopting the "male" style; but weak/ineffective/disrespected/not really a leader when using the "female" style. It is not surprising that fewer women than men aspire to leadership.

Many of the problems girls and women have in exercising leadership are caused by the lack of fit between the leader stereotype and the female stereotype. However, recent research has shown that the effectiveness of a leadership style is context-dependent. When followers/subordinates have little relevant experience or knowledge, are unmotivated,

immature, and unable or unwilling to take on responsibility, task-oriented, authoritarian leadership is most effective. As followers learn, mature, take responsibility, elements of the relationship-oriented style need to be added, until followers no longer need direction, only morale-building and support. Finally, an efficiently effective, mature group like the Princeton Institute of Advanced Studies needs neither prodding in the task-oriented nor emotional support in the relationship-oriented style. They provide all that for each other. The leader's role is leaving them alone, focusing on long-term planning and coordination with other groups.

This means that women and girls need to...

1. become willing and able to adopt the leadership style stereotyped as "male" when it is appropriate, without fearing or disliking it.
2. become willing to use the style stereotyped as "female" with fewer reservations, recognizing that, in many contexts, it is not only the more appropriate and effective, but is increasingly recognized to be so.
3. recognize that the various component elements of each style can be selectively combined-- a leader can both push for production, and build morale.

Boys and men need to do the same, substituting "female" in 1., and striking "with fewer reservations" in 2.

The message of the new leadership research is that good leaders, whether girls/women or boys/men, need to become more versatile, and adapt their leadership style to circumstances.

To learn to do so, as many opportunities as possible must be created where would-be leaders can try out leading and where followers can perceive them as leading. If not perceived as leaders, they will not be accepted as such.

Some examples of such opportunities in school contexts:

rotate leadership, so all regardless of gender take a turn;  
identify and give practice in informal leadership functions (in class, or in faculty meeting, roles of negotiator, focuser, clarifier, summarizer, challenger and so on--whatever helps attain group's goals);  
train for, and introduce, low-structure activities (little adult direction, reliance on student initiation and responsibility) known to result in both genders attempting leadership (and sometimes chaos);  
team students for meaningful activity (develop an alternative assessment, plan an assembly) and monitor emerging leaders, then debrief/discuss how and why they emerged;  
have more temporary task forces, each new one with new leader, instead of standing committees with long-lived chairs.  
In direct preparation for leadership...

give information on others' actual experiences in combining the role of leader and the role of girl/woman;

check appropriateness of level of protection given girls and women (experience with failure is needed, but also needed is breaking the association of failure with disgrace, and its replacement with the idea of failure as opportunity);

expect as high a level of performance as rigorously from girls and women as from boys and men;

help girls and women especially, but boys and men also, to feel validated by their own success in action, rather than by the approval of others.

Perceptions of leadership are influenced by language use, voice pitch, eye contact.

Assertive, "up-front" statements, projection of being in control of the situation with no anxiety or doubt, an abstract, impersonal style with little self-disclosure, and the interruption of others is characteristic of the way men and boys speak. Women and girls beat around the bush more, tend to use false starts, hesitant pacing, a questioning intonation when making statements, and an excessive number of qualifiers; they are often interrupted. The perception is that the men's style is the way leaders speak; but speech styles can be learned and unlearned.

Being the first to avert the eyes when eye-contact is made is perceived as demonstrating low power, as does looking at a partner in the conversation more often while listening than while speaking.; both are statistically more characteristic of girls and women, who need to avoid these behaviors if they are to be accepted as leaders.

Research shows that those using a low-pitched voice are perceived to be more important and authoritative than those using a high pitch. There are physiological reasons for men's voices on the average being lower pitched than women's. But everyone has a range from high to low; and while men consistently speak in the low range of their voices, women consistently speak at the high range of theirs. For leadership, this needs to change.

The bottom line: girls and women need information about the dimensions of leadership and the range of styles; opportunities to be leaders in different situations, using various styles; accurate feedback on their performance as leaders; personal encouragement and support. Boys and men need the same, though the emphases will differ. Versatility, practice, and persistence are the name of the game.

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## **PUBLIC/PRIVATE SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**

Session by Paul Vallas, CEO, Chicago Public Schools: Public/Private School Partnerships

Education is everyone's business. Since both have education at heart, public & private schools should be united in supporting and partnering each other. What we need is dynamic parochial, private, and public schools that collaborate rather than compete; support for each others' legislative initiatives for the benefit of all our students; and pushing the envelope on new ways to provide assistance to schools. One example: financially strapped parochial or private schools may want to consider reconstituting as a charter school, gaining the \$5000 per pupil that the state provides to charter schools. Vouchers won't solve education's problems: 80% or so of the nation's children will have to be educated through public schools in any case. We need to take parochialism out of educational funding.

The Department of Education's mandate that requires school superintendent to administer/ monitor/ audit partnerships is a source of frustration. Federal government needs to catch up to where we are on local level with collaboration: joint professional development initiative, inviting churches to come into school to help with counseling. There is cause for optimism that the charter program opens new educational opportunities, with schools that we require to have open enrolment and to take standardized, including state, tests.

Historically, when there were thriving parochial school systems, we also had thriving public schools; and when we had dynamic schools, we had dynamic communities. It is a matter of mutual support, not of competition. We are in the business of education, and anyone that expands educational choices needs to be supported

Public schools in Chicago have drawn on already existing parochial and private school initiatives and successes, and applied them in the public schools, such as accountability, standards, service learning, character education. In turn, the public school system is so big that it has the advantage of being able to do R & D; some programs (e.g., summer programs) they have developed have had phenomenal success, and they offer access to all their curricular models and instructional materials, resources, and program information to anyone who wants it. If interested in accessing any of their resources, call 773-553-1500 (Linda) or 773-553-2150 (Dr. Davis.)

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## **THE BRAIN AND LEARNING**

Session by Joan L. Whitman, program chair, MEPD, Cardinal Stritch University (WI): The Biology of Education

Recent developments in technology have given us better understanding of the physiology of learning, and how it impacts curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and so on. The cerebellum, one of the first parts of the brain to develop, controls movement, which is a basic need. Movement brings more oxygen to the body, more blood to the brain, and therefore enables better focusing. In one classroom, asking students every 20 minutes to stand up, tell their neighbor what they have just heard in the class, move has resulted after 3 weeks in students turning in more homework and being more attentive. Making students sit still for 50 minutes shuts down higher brain functions. Research says 70-90 minute block schedule is a good idea, in part because it forces teachers to change how they teach. Greater variety, switching from listening to speaking and writing makes for change of state, activity, which is good. Having students move by stretching, getting up, moving seats is even better.

Educationally, we want students to use the top and center of their brain. Hearing words is between the ears in the middle of the brain; speaking in the parietal area at the top of the head; generating words, in the frontal lobe (which is the "civilizing mechanism," involved in decision making, control and forming thought-processes.) Research on hyperactive kids shows that there are differences in the way they process in the frontal lobe.

There are windows of opportunity for learning. Language skills in boys develop more slowly on the average than in girls. What enhances the verbal development in girls is that the two hemispheres of the brain are more connected, allowing easier development of language at a faster rate. Boys may not read by the end of first grade. But do we need to retain a first grader because he doesn't read? Give him time, and he will. Boys catch up gradually as more connections are developed in their brain; and the more language opportunities a child's environment provides, the more connections among neurons the brain develops. Marion Diamond's *Magic Trees of the Mind* is a good book that explains how the brain grows, and recommends activities and toys for the enrichment of children's environment.

Possibly as a result of technology (TV, computers), we are now getting children in the primary grades with smaller than expected vocabularies. They are not forming sentences; they learn nouns, but do not connect nouns and verbs into phrases; they look and listen, but do not move, and do not speak. The prediction is that ACT/SAT verbal scores will go down; the fact that if they can not use language, they can not develop higher order thinking skills compounds the problem. Even now, the engineering school is teaching how to have a conversation with future employers, and how to interview. Students can write a resume, but don't know how to talk. The frontal lobe has not been exercised enough.

Research recommends that in early grades students be made to write, and to memorize by rote (provided they understand what they are memorizing and that there are connections between real life and what is memorized). Enrichment, learning to make connections, is particularly important before middle school; if by then students have not acquired a good vocabulary base and memorization skills, learning will become increasingly difficult for them.

Some specific suggestions based on brain research:

Design instruction using all the senses, & vary activities.

Provide processing time for new information during class.

Teach in short time segments--break up class into 15-20 minute blocks, shorter for the young.

Teach 7 (plus or minus 2) bits of information at a time.

Provide the big picture first and details second.

Provide reflection time during question/answer activities.

Provide review at end of class period.

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Author: Anne Chapman. Scribe for the ISACS Annual Conference, November 2000, Chicago.